**Business Assist Registration Form**

Please look at the guidance notes or call us to discuss if your business is eligible for support. Please then complete the form to apply for a low carbon innovation or renewable energy generation Business Assist.

With a Renewable Energy Generation Business Assist, the advisor will assess what renewable energy technologies would suit your business and provide you with information and recommendations.

With a Low Carbon Products/Services Development Assist, the advisor will discuss your current Business Plan and needs and being steered by you, give specialist advice on low carbon innovation in products, processes or services, or give support on diversification into the low carbon sector.

A Business Assist **must** be carried out before you can apply for a grant from the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme.

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| **SME Details**  |
| **Company Name** |  | **Contact Name** |  |
| **Address** |  | **Telephone Number** |  |
| **Year Business Started** |  | **Post Code** |  | **Company Registration Number** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Number of Employees** |  | **To which local authority do you pay your business rates?** |  |
| **Brief description of your business activities** |  |
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| **Business Assist** |
| Through this programme, you can apply to receive either a Low Carbon Products/Services Development Assist or a Renewable Energy Generation Assist. Please select which Business Assist you are applying for:  |
| Low Carbon Products/Services Development Assist | [ ]  Yes |
| Renewable Energy Generation Assist | [ ]  Yes |
| What are you aiming to achieve with the Assist? |  |

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| **SME Status** |
| In order to receive support from the European Union you must meet certain requirements, please confirm the following about your organisation: (*To complete the boxes below, double-click on a box and select* **CHECKED**.) |
| Has fewer than 250 employees (full time equivalent) |  [ ]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| Annual turnover does not exceed €50 million  |  [ ]  Does **not** exceed [ ]  Exceeds |
| Please state most recent annual turnover |  |
| Current balance sheet does not exceed €43 million |  [ ]  Does **not** exceed [ ]  Exceeds |
| Does a separate enterprise own 25% or more of the capital or the voting rights of your business? | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| *If Yes, is this enterprise an SME?* | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  N/A |
| Is your business involved with any governmental Organisations or supply government organisations ot provide functions which are a statutory government responsibility? | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No  |
| *If yes, please give details:* |  |

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| **Additional questions** |
| Where did you hear about the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme? |  |
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| **Monitoring** |
| By receiving a Low Carbon Opportunities Programme Business Assist you are agreeing to participate in monitoring activities to assess how the project is meeting targets such as reducing CO2 emissions, increasing renewable energy generation and increasing the numbers of innovation active SMEs. If you do not provide this information you will be liable for the full cost of the Business Assist. |
| **Are you willing to provide us with future monitoring information when requested in the future?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No  |

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| **Company declaration** *(Signed by person with authority to sign for this organisation)* |
| I certify that the information contained within the application declaration is true and accurate and agree to the terms and conditions below. |
| **Name:** |  | **Signature:** |  |
| **Position:** |  | **Date:** |  |

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| **How We Use Your Information and Data Protection** |
| **Privacy Notice**For information on how your information is used, how Worcestershire County Council maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information held on you, please view the Privacy Notice for the Growth & Investment and Sustainability Team on WCC's Privacy webpage: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/privacy> **Marketing** **We will automatically keep you up to date with information about your grant or business assist, but in order to process your application, we require a response to confirm whether you wish to opt-in or opt-out to receive marketing updates and how you wish to be contacted:** □ Yes, I consent to receive occasional newsletters and updates regarding services and products that I might be interested in, such as grants, funding, business support and events, from the Growth & Investment and Sustainability Teams and the contractors working on their behalf.I consent to being contacted via the following methods:□ Post □ Email □ Telephone□ No, I do not consent to receive occasional newsletters and updates regarding services and products that I might be interested in, such as grants, funding, business support and events, from the Growth & Investment and Sustainability Teams and the contractors working on their behalf.If you have consented to receive marketing, you may opt out at a later date. If you no longer wish to be contacted for marketing purposes, please contact: businesssupportmarket@worcestershire.gov.uk |

 **What do you need to do next?**

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| Have you completed all the boxes?  | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| Have you completed and included the De Minimis State Aid Declaration with this form? (This can be found at the end of this form) | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |

**Please post the signed original hard copy of the registration form and any supporting documentation including the De Minimis State Aid Declaration to:**

Low Carbon Opportunties Programme, SustainabilityTeam, E&I, Worcestershire County Council, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcestershire, WR5 2NP

**Please also submit your registration form by email to:** **sustainability@worcestershire.gov.uk**

**Guidance Notes**

**Are you eligible?**

An email notification will be sent to the email address you have provided to confirm the receipt of the Business Assist Application Form.

To qualify, your business must:

1. Be situated in and trading from Worcestershire
2. Employ fewer than 250 employees
3. Have a turnover of less than the equivalent of 50 million Euros per annum or a balance sheet of less than 43 million Euros

Some industries such as primary agriculture are not eligible. This support is aimed at businesses who primarily serve other businesses. Other activities are excluded such as social welfare and education facilities, banking and insurance. Priority will be given to businesses that help meet the projects aims. Support is subject to the availability of funding.

**What happens next?**

1. We will assess whether your organisation is eligible and suitable for support under the European Regional Development Fund, State Aid and programme criteria.
2. You will be contacted within 10 working days of receipt, to confirm the completed application has been received and that you are eligible for a Business Assist.
3. An Advisor will then contact you to arrange to visit your premises and undertake the Business Assist (12 hours of support to be provided in total).
4. You will receive a Recommendations Report including an Action Plan.
5. The Advisor will discuss the report with you and help you to decide what actions to take.
6. If you would then like to apply for a grant, the Advisor will provide support to help you complete the grant application form.
7. By receiving a Business Assist you are agreeing to participate in future monitoring activities to assess how the programme is meeting targets such as reducing CO2 emissions, increasing renewable energy generation and increasing the numbers of innovation active SMEs. **Please note, if you do not provide this information you will be liable for the full cost of the assessment.**

**Programme Funding**

The Low Carbon Opportunities Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund Programme as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department for Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for the European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community.

**Business Assists**

Low Carbon Products/Services Development Assist

The Low Carbon Products/Services Development Assist is comprised of a Diagnostic Assessment, completed through discussion with the business, which looks at the current position of the SME, reviewing their current practice and position in the marketplace, and opportunities for development or diversification. The Assessment will include examination of the current business and their research and development strategy, examination of the marketplace which the SME is in or looking to develop into, examination of current SME practice with regard to low carbon clean tech innovation and examination of the SMEs current position in the marketplace.

The Advisor will then analyse and discussion with the SME the opportunities for diversification or development in the low carbon products and services sector, including analysis and evaluation of the SMEs ideas for business development and growth, analyse and discussion with the SME of the opportunities for new products or processes to be introduced and analyse potential for business or research institution collaboration links.

The diagnostic assessment is followed by specialist advice or assistance. The specialist advice could cover IP and patents, an overview of the innovation ecosystem for their technology / idea, obtaining investment, investor opportunities / networks to approach, bringing a product to market, opportunities for technology testing, and/or market research (where appropriate). Assistance could be provided in establishing links with research institutions or businesses identified as potential collaborators (where appropriate) and/or facilitation of initial meeting/s between identified collaboration partners.

The Advisor will then complete a Recommendations Report and present this report to the SME, providing follow up support to help businesses implement suggested measures as required or apply for a programme grant.

Renewable Energy Generation Assists

The assist will be comprised of a Diagnostic Assessment, completed through discussion with the SME, assessing the potential and suitability of the SME for renewable energy and identifying the most appropriate technology / technologies to consider in more detail. This diagnostic assessment will include assessing the current energy usage, the balance of energy usage between electricity, gas and other fuel sources. The assessor will also consider the fabric of the building and it's use, fluctuation in energy demand and the benefits of installing renewables for the SME. They will examine the potential opportunities for renewable energy generation systems, including innovation solutions tailored to the needs of the SME.

This will be followed by an outline feasibility assessment which will consider the technical and economic feasibility of the appropriate technology/technologies identified. This feasibility assessment will include estimation of the costs of installing the identified option and a cost-benefit analysis to determine the economic viability, including whether the SME should apply for a programme grant to assist with the capital costs of installation, or whether the SME should self-fund the capital costs and then be able to apply for government subsidies (FITs or RHI). The Advisor will also consider the potential need for planning permission, any ecological impacts or issues and the greenhouse gas savings which could be made.

The Advisor will then complete a Recommendations Report and present this report to the SME, providing follow up support to help businesses implement recommended renewable energy systems as required or apply for a programme grant.

**Business Assist Terms and Conditions**

The applicant declares that:-

1. It satisfies all the SME eligibility criteria as set out in the Registration Form completed and submitted to Worcestershire County Council.
2. It undertakes to advise the Council of any change of address, if it ceases to trade, changes in circumstances that result in the business no longer fitting the SME criteria set out in the Registration Form or of any other circumstances that may affect its right to assistance through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).
3. In receiving a Business Assist, it is agreeing to allow an Advisor access to property, processes, people, documentation, utility meters, records and resources relating to the project and provide contact details for suppliers where applicable.
4. It declares that it meets any legal requirements or other regulations, which relate to the operation of its business.
5. It understands that support from the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme is subject to the availability of funding and the aims of the project.
6. It understands that false declarations may invalidate its application and consequently the value of any assistance awarded must be repaid on request.
7. It understands that it will be contacted in the future to assess the impact of the Business Assist. It understands that this could be by way of a visit to the company, telephone, mail or electronically.
8. It is aware of its obligation to participate in monitoring activities and supply any requested evidence such as energy bills and business accounts.
9. If there is a change of ownership within the business the new owner/s must be made aware of the monitoring requirements.
10. It understands that in processing this application, information will be shared with members of the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme Board. Commercially sensitive information will be maintained as ‘commercial - in confidence’ subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
11. It understands that the programme administrators may wish to make contact in the future with details of new initiatives, available support or other assistance. This could be by telephone, mail or email.
12. It agrees to sign the Business Assist Declaration on request as a true and accurate record.
13. It will adhere to ERDF Publicity regulations set out in the document 'England 2014 – 2020 European Structural Investment Funds Growth Programme: European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund Branding and Publicity Requirements.
14. Any promotion by the business, of participation in Low Carbon Opportunities Programme must be approved by the programme manager.
15. It will be available and cooperate with the programme administrators and ERDF to undertake a site visit if required.
16. It will ensure that any documentation in relation to the assessment is stored and retained until a date that is three years beyond the closure of the ERDF programme which currently stands at 31 December 2033. This should be available if the company were subject to an audit by the ERDF.

**De Minimis State Aid Declaration**

To receive a Business Support Assist you will need to sign this declaration.

We are more than happy to talk you through this.

You are being offered the Business Assist under the De Minimis State aid regulation.

Under World Trade Organisation agreements and European regulations, any assistance from the public sector towards trading operations must be strictly controlled and fall within agreed limits.

De minimis aid is assistance from a public source for a trading activity which is below the threshold of aid requiring prior notification and approval from the Commission. This assistance is provided through the De Minimis Commission Regulation (European Union) No 1407/2013, OJ L352/1.

These levels have been revised since 1st of January 2007. This now allows a company[[1]](#footnote-1) to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis aid over a three-year period for most sectors. However, Transport sector is still restricted to €100,000. Fisheries have a limit of €30,000 and Agriculture, other than marketing of processed products, is limited to €7,000.

Both of these last two sectors are subject to special procedures and require the permission of Defra[[2]](#footnote-2). Please note that the limits are in Euros, therefore when measuring the level of aid given, the official Commission Euro / £ exchange rate at the time that the assistance is granted must be used to determine the amount of aid given[[3]](#footnote-3).

**To confirm that you are able to receive this assistance you must declare the full amount of aid, from any public source, and in any format, you have already received over the last 3 financial years.** You must declare whether or not it was De minimis aid. All aid received whether De minimis aid or exempted aid, must now be declared. Please note that this is a change from the requirements of previous regulations. Please be explicit in your explanation of what the aid you received has been used for.

The following is not a comprehensive list of the possible forms of aid. However it should give an indication of the most common forms of aid, which you may have been given over the past three years. Potentially any assistance from a public body might be an aid. Should you have any doubts on this matter, please contact the body from which the assistance was received:

* Grants from public bodies
* Loans from public bodies at favourable rates
* Loan guarantees from public bodies
* Differential tax benefits
* Grants from an investment trust (including charities) which may themselves have received the funds from a public body
* Investment from a part publicly funded venture capital fund
* Publicly administered funds, even if the funds were originally not public such as the national lottery
* Landfill tax
* Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due to a public body such as the waiving or deferral of rent or waiver of interest normally due on late payment of taxation or other costs to a public body
* Monopoly licences or guarantees of market share
* Advertising via a public channel such as a tourist board or state owned television
* Consultancy advice provided either free or at a reduced rate
* Training provided either free or at a reduced rate
* Aid for investment in environmental projects
* Provision of a free or reduced rate feasibility study for research and development or other assistance with research and development
* Purchase of public land or property at a less than market rate
* Benefiting from the provision of infrastructure where your organisation was pre-identified as a beneficiary

These types of aid may have been provided under De Minimis (as De Minimis aid) or under another State Aid regulation. If you are in any doubt whether aid received was De Minimis aid or about its value, check with the organisation, which provided it. If they are unable to say or there is any uncertainty, assume that it was De Minimis aid.

Any De Minimis aid awarded to you under this project will have to be declared if you apply, or have applied, for any other public funding. Therefore, if successful, the offer letter must be retained and shown to any other public body to whom you apply for funding for the three years following the offer.

The use of public funding is subject to checks and audits. False declarations will lead to the recovering of the value of the assistance offered plus interest.

**I CONFIRM** that the financial year of the business named belowruns from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I further confirm that the businesshas received the following De Minimis aid during this financial year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the previous two fiscal years \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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| Date aid awarded | Value of the aid in Euros. | From which organisation and which scheme | What activity or item was the aid given for |
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 (Continue on a separate sheet if required…)

I warrant that I am authorised to sign on behalf of this business and I confirm that I understand the requirements of De Minimis (Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013). I acknowledge that if the businessfails to meet the eligibility requirements, it may become liable to repay the full value of the assistance provided.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  | **Date:** |  |
| **Position:** |  |
| **Company/Organisation***(full legal name)* |  |



1. The limit applies to aid received by your company in the UK or if you are part of a group to your parent company. If this is the case it may be more practical for you to get this form completed by your parent company. If your own company is a parent to subsidiary companies then you must include the De Minimis aid received by your subsidiaries in the UK in this declaration. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DEFRA Department for Farming and Rural Affairs [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. European Exchange Rates accessible from <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)